



Northeastern University

September 15, 2020

Mr. Antonio Barletta
Town Administrator
Town of Nahant
334 Nahant Road
Nahant, Massachusetts 01908

Dear Mr. Barletta,

I am writing on behalf of Northeastern University in response to your September 3, 2020 letter (“September 3rd letter”) regarding, in summary, Town of Nahant hearings related to the proposed expansion of the Marine Science Center in Nahant.

With respect to the September 3rd letter’s request that Northeastern refrain “from any further filings...” in connection with the Marine Science Center project due to the “...unique circumstances and challenges facing the Town in these challenging times...”, Northeastern is certainly aware of the public safety challenges posed by the current pandemic and committed to protecting the well-being of meeting participants in partnership with the Town of Nahant. Due to its own efforts to address the circumstances presented by the current pandemic, Northeastern has acquired deep expertise in safely conducting in-person gatherings, as well as hybrid and virtual meetings. Northeastern would be happy to work with the Town to identify and implement procedures and technology to facilitate a virtual Conservation Commission process that will safeguard public safety while allowing full public participation. We believe the public approval processes, including hearings before the Conservation Commission related to the proposed expansion of the Marine Science Center, can proceed safely with the full participation of the public. Since the Nahant Conservation Commission is still hosting meetings in other matters, Northeastern requests that the Town work with Northeastern to enable the Conservation Commission and other Town bodies to conduct hearings in this matter, albeit in a safe and responsible manner.

Northeastern understands that other Town boards and commissions within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have been conducting virtual hearings and public meetings on various matters—including public hearings on matters pending before Conservation Commissions. Many other cities and towns in Massachusetts are

employing the same procedures we reference in this communication, including projects that attract considerable public interest and participation.

Therefore, Northeastern respectfully declines your request that it forgo its rights to petition municipal or other permit granting or review bodies for permits and approvals it needs for the expansion of the Marine Science Center until the state of emergency is lifted. As noted above, to the extent that such applications involve a public hearing process, Northeastern believes that a combination of modalities—virtual hearings and hybrid meetings that combine socially distant in-person gatherings with virtual real time meetings—can be conducted so as to ensure public safety while giving interested members of the public access to fully participate.

Likewise, Northeastern respectfully declines your request that it suspend all “site work” at its property. In declining your request, Northeastern will conduct permitted and necessary work on its property while adhering to appropriate COVID-related safety measures—as the Town itself is doing in many locations throughout Nahant. Indeed, at the Town’s request, Northeastern has allowed the Town survey crew to complete work on and around the Northeastern property.

We will continue to inform the Town of coming work that requires coordination with the Town, as we have during the entirety of the project.

Sincerely,



Ralph C. Martin II
Senior Vice-President and General Counsel
Northeastern University